



Sockeye Run Fitness Trail and Bike Path

Naknek, AK

Project Description: The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program, Katmai National Park and Preserve, and a number of additional partners, came together in 2008 to begin work on a community trail project in Naknek, Alaska—an NPS Gateway Community. In the town of Naknek, there are no maintained trails of any kind. The proposed two-mile trail – the Sockeye Run Fitness Trail and Bike Path – was the brainchild of eight-year old Isabel Babiak, who in 2008 envisioned a safe walking trail to her school. She rallied her classmates to support this project and her proposal inspired the whole community and many agencies to help build the trail.

“There’s a lot of planning in planning a plan! I’m glad RTCA is there to help.” Isabel Babiak, age 11, Naknek, AK.

Local, youth-designed interpretive signs along the trail provide natural resource educational opportunities and health benefit information to students, area residents and the 50,000 visitors who travel to the region each summer. Partners with interpretive expertise worked with local schoolchildren and community residents to design two to three of these interpretive displays.

An Alaskan professional film-maker, Deborah Schildt (*ifilms*, Alaska Films Services) chronicled Isabel and her community’s story of the Sockeye Run Fitness Trail and Bike Path. This 30-minute video will tell the story of the trail and the importance of individual and community stewardship of the land. As an exciting addition to the film project, a team of three media professionals put on three one-week digital media workshops for local kids, to teach them about the important connection between nature and the arts.

RTCA Role: RTCA worked with partners and community members to design and construct the Sockeye Run Fitness Trail and Bike Path and interpretive signs. RTCA helped organize the whole community to reach out to others for help and to secure funding to make it all happen on the ground. In addition, RTCA helped bring partners such as Safe Routes to Schools and Healthy Futures to the table to help identify additional trail opportunities.

RTCA Contact: Lisa Holzapfel, Heather Rice

Partners: Isabel Babiak, Bristol Bay Borough, Bristol Bay School District, Naknek Elks Club, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, ADOT-Safe Routes to Schools Program, Alaska Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Katmai National Park and Preserve, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects